



Americans think a president's power should be checked, AP-NORC poll finds — unless their side wins

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI and LINLEY SANDERS

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Like many Americans, Richard Bidon says he'd like to see the U.S. government "go back to its original design" — a system of checks and balances developed nearly 240 years ago to prevent any branch, especially the presidency, from becoming too powerful. But that's mainly when Republicans are in power. Bidon, an 84-year-old Democrat who lives near Los Angeles, said if President Joe Biden is reelected, he doesn't want him to have to get the approval of a possibly Republican-controlled Congress to enact policies to slow climate change. He wants presidents to have the power to change policy unilaterally — as long as they're from the right party. "When a Democrat's in, I support" a strong presidency, Bidon said. "When Republicans are in, I don't support it that much. It's sort of a wishy-washy thing."



President Joe Biden speaks at an event in Raleigh, N.C., March. 26, 2024.

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Aruba to Me

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Don't miss out on this week's farmer's market at STR FARM Aruba!

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LIVE ENTERTAINMENT 7 DAYS A WEEK

PROFESSIONAL COMPLIMENTARY PICTURES ON TUESDAY AND FRIDAY

SUNDAY:

MARRYBELL MADURO
SINGER
6:30 - 8:30pm

MONDAY:

ANGELA FLORES
VIOLINIST
6:30 - 8:30pm

TUESDAY:

JEAN PAUL
SAXOPHONIST
6:30 - 8:30pm

WEDNESDAY:

EDDIE KROON
SINGER 4:00 - 6:00pm
MAILLEYN ALVARADO
VIOLINIST 6:30 - 8:30pm

THURSDAY:

MARRYBELL MADURO
SINGER
6:30 - 8:30pm

FRIDAY:

RICKY THOMAS
GUITARIST
7:00 - 9:00pm

SATURDAY:

EDDIE KROON
SINGER
4:00 - 6:00pm

WATER'S EDGE
RESTAURANT & BAR

costa linda
beach resort

KARAOKE 9:00 - 11:00pm

Happy Hour
12 - 1 / 4 - 6 / 9 - 10

PREMIUM BRANDS

ANGELA FLORES
VIOLINIST
6:30 - 8:30pm

Americans think a president's power should be checked, AP-NORC poll finds — unless their side wins

Continued from Front

A new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Opinion Research finds that Biden's view is common. Though Americans say don't want a president to have too much power, that view shifts if the candidate of their party wins the presidency. It's a view held by members of both parties, though it's especially common among Republicans.

Overall, only about 2 in 10 Americans say it would be "a good thing" for the next president to be able to change policy without waiting on Congress or the courts. But nearly 6 in 10 Republicans say it would be good for a future President Donald Trump to take unilateral action, while about 4 in 10 Democrats say the same if Biden is reelected. The sentiment comes amid escalating polarization and is a sign of the public's willingness to push the boundaries of the political framework that has kept the U.S. a stable democracy for more than two centuries. In the poll, only 9% of Americans say the nation's system of checks and balances is working extremely or very well. It also follows promises by Trump to "act as a dictator" on day one of a new administration to secure the border and expand oil and gas drilling.

Bob Connor, a former carpenter now on disability in Versailles, Missouri, wants that type of decisive action on the border. He's given up hope on Congress taking action. "From what I've seen, the Republicans are trying to get some stuff done, the Democrats are trying to get some other stuff done — they're not mixing in the middle," said Connor, 56. "We're not getting anywhere."

He blames the influx of migrants on Biden unilaterally revoking some of Trump's own unilateral border security policies when he took office.

"I'm not a Trump fanatic, but what he's saying has to get done is right," Connor said. Joe Titus, a 69-year-old Democrat from Austin, Texas, believes Republicans have destroyed Congress' ability to



Republican presidential candidate former President Donald Trump speaks April 2, 2024, at a rally in Green Bay, Wis.

Associated Press

act in its traditional legislative role and says Biden will have to step into the gap.

"There's this so-called 'majority' in Congress, and they're a bunch of whack-jobs," Titus, a retired Air Force mechanic, said of the GOP-controlled House of Representatives. "It's not the way this thing was set up."

The current Congress is setting dubious records as the least productive one in the country's history, with fewer than three dozen bills sent to Biden's desk last year. At Trump's urging, House Republicans have stalled aid to Ukraine and a bipartisan immigration bill.

Titus said that in general he opposes expanded presidential power but would support Biden funding more immigration judges and sending additional aid to Ukraine on his own.

"There's certain things that it seems to me the public

wants and the other party is blocking," Titus said.

The presidency has steadily gained power in recent years as congressional deadlocks have become more common. Increasingly, the nation's chief executive is moving to resolve issues through administrative policy or executive orders. The U.S. Supreme Court is poised to rule later this year on a case that could significantly weaken the ability of federal agencies — and thus a presidential administration — to issue regulations.

Meanwhile, conservatives are planning a takeover of the federal bureaucracy should they win the White House in November, a move that could increase the administration's ability to make sweeping policy changes on its own. The AP-NORC poll found that voters' views of which institutions have too much power were colored by their own partisanship. Only 16%

of Democrats, whose party currently controls the White House, say the presidency has too much power while nearly half of Republicans believe it does. In contrast, about 6 in 10 Democrats say the U.S. Supreme Court, with its 6-3 conservative majority, has too much power.

With Congress evenly divided between the two parties — the GOP has a narrow House majority, Democrats a narrow Senate one — Americans have similar views on its power regardless of party. About 4 in 10 from both major parties say it has too much power.

"I think Congress had too much power when the presidency and Congress were both ruled by Democrats, but now that Republicans are in the majority there's an equal balance," said John V. Mohr, a 62-year-old housecleaner in Wilmington, North Carolina. In contrast, he complained that Biden is "sitting there writ-

ing executive orders left and right," including his proclamation marking Transgender Day of Visibility, which fell on Easter Sunday this year.

The abstract idea of a president with nearly unchecked power remains unpopular. Steven Otney, a retired trucker in Rock Hill, South Carolina, said major policies should be approved by Congress and gain approval from the courts. But he also said it depends on the topic. He wants to see prompt action on certain issues by the next president if he's Trump.

"Some things need to be done immediately, like that border wall being finished," said Otney, a Republican. He said it's just common sense. "If Trump got in there and said 'I want to bomb Iran,' no, that's crazy," Otney said. "Within reason, not stupid stuff either way. Something to help the American people, not hurt us." □

U.S.-Chinese military talks resume on safety in the air and at sea after a nearly 2-year break

By LOLITA C. BALDOR

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — For the first time in nearly two years, U.S. and Chinese defense officials met this week to discuss unsafe and aggressive ship and aircraft incidents between the two militaries in the Pacific region, restarting a dialogue that Beijing abruptly ended in a dispute involving Taiwan.

The meeting, which was Wednesday and Thursday in Hawaii, came as Washington and Beijing work to expand communications between the two world powers and ease escalating tensions. Military-to-military contact had stalled in August 2022, when Beijing suspended all such communication after then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan, the self-governing island China claims as its own.

The thaw in relations between the two countries got a kick-start last November when U.S. President Joe Biden and China's President Xi Jinping met on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in San Francisco. About a month later, Gen. CQ Brown, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, spoke with his Chinese counterpart in a video call in the first senior military-to-military



U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, left, shakes hands with Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng during a meeting at the Guangdong Zhudao Guest House in southern China's Guangdong province, Friday, April 5, 2024.

Associated Press

tary contact since the Pelosi visit.

Other top-level talks have continued, including a call earlier this week between Biden and Xi, and a visit to China by Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen that began on Thursday.

The resurgence of senior military leader discussions includes the relaunch of routine engagements, including the China-U.S. Military Maritime Consultative Agreement meeting, which was this week in Hawaii,

and the bilateral Defense Policy Coordination Talks, which were held earlier this year.

The maritime meeting is focused on unsafe and unprofessional incidents involving the U.S. and Chinese militaries while the coordination talks focus on broader policy issues. This week's meeting included personnel from Indo-Pacific Command, U.S. Pacific Fleet, U.S. Pacific Air Forces and the People's Liberation Army. This is the first time

since 2019 that the meeting was held in person; there was a virtual meeting in 2021, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to officials, this week's meeting included about 18 senior military and civilian officials from each side. The U.S. and China delegations each brought up several specific incidents over the past several years that they believe raised operational safety concerns, and the group discussed them.

"Open, direct, and clear communications with the PLA - and with all other military forces in the region - is of utmost importance to avoid accidents and miscommunication," said the head of the U.S. delegation, Army Col. Ian Francis in a statement.

Francis, who is the director for Northeast Asia policy at U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, said the U.S. is encouraged that the People's Liberation Army is honoring its commitments to the maritime agreement.

Two U.S. officials said that they've seen a reduction in the number of unsafe incidents by Chinese military aircraft and ships over the past several months. They said the meeting was a way to make sure that the trend continues and that overall safety is increased in the region for troops who operate there. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because the meetings are private.

The U.S. has consistently viewed military communications with China as critical to avoiding any missteps between their armed forces and to maintaining a peaceful Indo-Pacific. Pelosi became the highest-ranking American lawmaker to visit Taiwan since 1997, when then-Speaker Newt Gingrich traveled there. □

Sen. Bernie Sanders's office in Vermont caught fire. Arson is suspected, but the motive is unclear

BURLINGTON, Vt. (AP) — Police in Vermont are seeking a suspect who allegedly started a fire Friday outside the office of U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders. The small blaze caused minor damages but no injuries.

Authorities say an unknown male suspect sprayed what they described as a possible accelerant on the office door, set it on fire and fled. They said the suspect remained at large and no motive had been estab-

lished.

"A significant fire engulfed the door and part of the vestibule, impeding the egress of staff members who were working in the office and endangering their lives," Burlington police said in a statement. "The sprinkler system then engaged and largely extinguished the fire."

Earlier in the day, the Burlington Fire Department said it responded to a call Friday morning and found a fire

between the vestibule, the elevator and the entrance door of Sanders' third-floor office in Burlington. The office door suffered moderate fire damage and much of the third floor sustained significant water damage. The offices of Sanders and those nearby were evacuated.

A spokesperson for Sanders did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Sanders was not at the office. □



Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., talks to the media as he walks to the House chamber before President Joe Biden's State of the Union address at the U.S. Capitol Thursday, March 7, 2024, in Washington.

Associated Press

An earthquake centered between NYC and Philadelphia rattles much of the Northeast

By JENNIFER PELTZ and
MIKE CATALINI

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — An earthquake centered between New York and Philadelphia shook skyscrapers and suburbs across the northeastern U.S. Friday, causing no widespread damage but startling millions of people in an area unaccustomed to temblors.

The U.S. Geological Survey said over 42 million people might have felt the mid-morning quake with a preliminary magnitude of 4.8, centered near Whitehouse Station, New Jersey, or about 45 miles (72 kilometers) west of New York City and 50 miles (80 kilometers) north of Philadelphia.

People from Baltimore to Boston and beyond felt the ground shake. The temblor severely damaged three multifamily homes in Newark, New Jersey, displacing nearly 30 residents. Officials around the region were checking bridges and other major infrastructure, some flights were diverted or delayed, Amtrak slowed trains throughout the busy Northeast Corridor, and a Philadelphia-area commuter rail line suspended service as a precaution.

Pictures and decorative plates tumbled off the wall in Christiann Thompson's house in Whitehouse Station, she said, relaying what her husband had told her by phone as she volunteered at a library.

"The dogs lost their minds and got very terrified and ran around," she said.

Whitehouse Station Fire Chief Tim Apgar said no injuries were reported, but responders fielded some calls from people who smelled gas. Nearby, the upper portion of the 264-year-old Col. John Taylor's Grist Mill historic site collapsed onto a roadway, according to Readington Township Mayor Adam Mueller.

In a 26th-floor midtown Manhattan office, Shawn Clark felt the quake and initially feared an explosion or construction accident. It was "pretty weird and



People walk around Times Square as news tickers display news about the earthquake on Friday April 5, 2024 in New York.

Associated Press

scary," the attorney said. Aftershocks were reported hours later in a central New Jersey township, producing some reports of damage and items falling off shelves, Hunterdon County Public Safety Director Brayden Fahy said.

Earthquakes are less common on the eastern than western edges of the U.S. because the East Coast does not lie on a boundary of tectonic plates. The biggest Eastern quakes usually occur along the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, which extends through Iceland and the Atlantic Ocean.

But rocks under the East Coast are better than their western counterparts at spreading earthquake energy across long distances. "If we had the same magnitude quake in California, it probably wouldn't be felt nearly as far away," said U.S.

Geological Survey geophysicist Paul Caruso.

A 4.8-magnitude quake isn't large enough to cause damage, except for some minor effects near the epicenter, the agency posted on the social platform X.

By comparison, the temblor that killed at least 12

people and injured more than 1,000 in Taiwan on Wednesday was variously measured at a magnitude of 7.2 or 7.4.

Still, Friday's quake caused some disruption.

Flights to the New York, Newark and Baltimore airports were held at their origins for a time while officials inspected runways for cracks.

The Seton Hall University men's basketball team said its flight to Newark was held in Indianapolis, likely delaying a Friday afternoon welcome-home celebration of the team's National Invitational Tournament win Thursday.

At least five flights en route to Newark were diverted and landed at Lehigh Valley International Airport in Allentown, Pennsylvania, where some passengers rented carts to get home. Traffic through the Holland Tunnel between Jersey City, New Jersey, and lower Manhattan was stopped for about 10 minutes for inspections, the Port Authority of New York and Jersey said.

In midtown Manhattan, motorists blared their horns on shuddering streets.

Some Brooklyn residents heard a boom and felt their building shaking.

Cellphone circuits were overloaded for a time as people tried to reach loved ones and figure out what was going on. Later, phones blared with earthquake-related notifications during the New York Philharmonic's morning performance, where Anton Webern's Six Pieces for Orchestra "literally ended with a cellphone alert," said spokesperson Adam Crane.

At U.N. headquarters in New York, the shaking interrupted the chief executive of Save The Children, Janti Soeripto, as she briefed an emergency Security Council session on conditions in Gaza amid the Israel-Hamas war.

In New York City's Astoria neighborhood, Cassandra Kurtz was giving her 14-year-old Chihuahua, Chiki, a cocoa-butter rub-down for her dry skin. Kurtz was recording the moment on video when her apartment started shaking hard enough that a large mirror banged audibly against a wall.

The video captured Kurtz

looking around, perplexed. Chiki, however, "was completely unbothered."

Friday's quake was felt as far as Maine, where "it felt like the floor was almost doing the wave" in Meghan Hebert South Portland apartment.

Some Vermont and New Hampshire residents initially figured it was snow falling off their roofs or plow trucks rumbling by. In Hartford, Connecticut, paralegal Stacy Santa Cruz watched her computer screen shake.

Sarah Brody and her two daughters were in a 14th-floor Philadelphia hotel room when water in the bathroom sink started quivering. The visitors from Los Angeles immediately recognized the sensation, "and we were not psyched about being on the 14th floor if it turned out to be a major earthquake," Brody said.

Earthquakes with magnitudes near or above 5 struck near New York City in 1737, 1783 and 1884, the USGS said. Friday's rumbles also stirred memories of the Aug. 23, 2011, earthquake that jolted people from Georgia to Canada. Centered in Virginia, the 5.8-magnitude quake was the strongest earthquake to hit the East Coast since World War II.

President Joe Biden said he spoke to New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy about Friday's earthquake. The White House said the administration would provide help if needed.

New York City had no indications of major safety or infrastructure problems from the earthquake, Mayor Eric Adams said. City Buildings Commissioner James Oddo said officials would watch out for any delayed cracks or other effects on the Big Apple's 1.1 million buildings.

Meanwhile, even the delicately placed eggs that form part of a sculpture at a Chinatown art gallery stayed in place, to the relief of gallerist Kristen Thomas. □

U.N. human rights body calls for halt to weapons shipments to Israel as concerns about Gaza war mount

By JAMEY KEATEN

Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — The U.N.'s top human rights body called on countries to stop selling or shipping weapons to Israel in a resolution passed Friday that aims to help prevent rights violations against Palestinians amid Israel's blistering military campaign in Gaza.

The 47-member-country Human Rights Council voted 28-6 in favor of the resolution, with 13 abstentions. The sweeping measure takes aim at an array of Israeli actions such as impeding access to water and limiting shipments of humanitarian aid into Palestinian areas. It also calls on U.N.-backed independent investigators to report on shipments of weapons, munitions and "dual use" items that have both civilian and military applications that could be used by Israel against Palestinians. While non-binding, the resolution is bound to raise international pressure on Israel as a sign of widespread concern about its military campaign in Gaza, begun in response to the attacks



A view of the screen showing the result of a vote on a resolution regarding the Israeli military campaign in Gaza, during the 55th session of the Human Rights Council, at the European headquarters of the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, Friday, April 5, 2024.

Associated Press

in Israel by armed militants on Oct. 7, that has led to the killings of nearly 33,000 Palestinians. Western countries were divided. The U.S. and Germany opposed the resolution, France and Japan abstained, while Belgium, Finland and Luxembourg vot-

ed in favor.

Sustained applause interrupted the council president as he read the results. Israel's ambassador said she would not attend the rest of the day's session and called the resolution a "stain on the Human Rights Council and the United Nations as a whole."

"This council has long abandoned the Israeli people and long defended Hamas," Meirav Eilon Shazar said of the militant group behind the attacks. "It has become a shield for terrorists. It has turned a blind eye to any acts of violence against Israelis and Jews."

She said she was especially disappointed at European countries that backed the measure calling out Belgium, Luxembourg and Finland by name for supporting a resolution that did not condemn Hamas.

"I don't know if any of you counted, but Israel appears in the resolution 59 times 59 times," she told reporters afterward. "Hamas does not appear at all." Before the vote, the Palestinian ambassador in Geneva, Ibrahim Khraishi, decried the "humanitarian disaster" in Gaza, and appealed to envoys "to wake and stop this genocide ... televised live across the world, killing thousands of innocent Palestinian people."

Speaking in Arabic, Khraishi alluded to the genocide of Jews in Europe last century, saying: "We were not responsible, but we have been paying the price of what was done during the Second World War." Israel at times joined by the United States has regularly and roundly criticized the council for its alleged anti-Israel bias. □

Giorgio Armani bags were produced by exploited Chinese workers near Milan, Italian police say

By COLLEEN BARRY

Associated Press

MILAN (AP) — Exploited Chinese workers employed in Italy by an unauthorized subcontractor made handbags and accessories for the Giorgio Armani fashion house in a series of supply chain abuses that the in-house production company failed to properly monitor, Italian police said Friday.

The fashion house denied wrongdoing by GA Operations, which produces apparel, accessories and home decor for the Giorgio Armani Group brands.

"The company has always had control and prevention measures in place to minimize abuses in the supply chain," the Armani

statement said. "GA Operations will collaborate with the utmost transparency with the competent bodies to clarify its position on the matter."

According to police, GA Operations hired a subcontractor, which in turn hired unauthorized Chinese subcontractors that employed workers under the table, some of whom were in Italy illegally.

They allegedly disregarded health and safety regulations as well as rules governing working hours, breaks and days off.

Police said it was part of a system of caporalato, the illegal intermediation and exploitation of workers most often associated with the agricultural sector. Four

Chinese factory owners face a separate criminal investigation for their role.

GA Operations, meanwhile, is not under investigation, but has been placed under judicial administration for up to a year as part of a procedure to ensure legal operations, said Carabinieri Lt. Col. Loris Baldassarre.

A diagram released by police indicated that the Chinese subcontractor was paid 93 euros (\$100) for a handbag that the fashion house sold for around 1,800 euros (around \$1950). The authorized subcontractor, acting as the middleman but without real production capabilities, was paid 250 euros for the same bag, pocketing 157 euros for



In this frame grab taken from a footage released, Friday, April 5, 2024, by the Italian Carabinieri, paramilitary police, showing a bedroom in a workshop where leathers goods were being made in northern Italy.

Associated Press

each bag, police said. "The system allows for maximizing profits (in which) the Chinese factory actually produces the products,

lowering labor costs by resorting to off-the-books and illegal workers," police said in a statement. □

Dengue fever outbreak in Argentina leads to shortage of a must-have item: mosquito repellent

By ISABEL DEBRE
 Associated Press
 BUENOS AIRES, Argentina

(AP) — Shelves have gone empty, as residents hunt in vain and resort to DIY alternatives. And surging resale prices are shocking even to Argentines accustomed to triple-digit inflation. The country's latest crisis: There isn't enough mosquito repellent.

As the South American country contends with its worst outbreak of dengue fever in recent memory, bug spray has become this season's hot-ticket item. So hot that it's sold out in virtually all Buenos Aires stores and going for exorbitant prices online, in some cases as much as 10 times the retail value.

"We've been to at least 30 pharmacies all over the city and there is nothing left," Ana Infante said as she swatted mosquitoes away from her two small daughters, their arms visibly pocked with red bumps. Infante, 42, joined the frenzied race for repellent when her co-worker at an empanada shop fell seri-



A woman sprays herself with a makeshift mosquito repellent of vanilla and water as she waits to be attended at a hospital amid a surge in dengue fever cases, in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Friday, April 5, 2024.

ously ill with dengue last week.

"All we have is this," she said, raising her swatting hand.

Rampant hoarding and surging prices have stoked desperation. In one widely shared video from a market in the town of El Talar

outside the capital Thursday, shoppers are seen descending on an employee opening new boxes of bug spray, snatching up stock before he could place a single bottle on a shelf.

"I feel helpless, because I know I can't do anything," said Marta Velarde, a

65-year-old shop owner in Buenos Aires, recalling how a distraught customer recently threatened to punch her in the face when she broke the news she had no repellent left. "You have no explanation and people are very aggressive."

As public outrage mounted

and the repellent shortage evolved from nuisance to national news, the government busy battling sky-high inflation and near-daily protests was forced to intervene.

On Thursday, authorities lifted import restrictions on foreign-made mosquito repellents to boost supply and announced they would ramp up production at local labs.

"We spoke with producers who told us that they have changed their capacity to produce, they are doing it at their maximum capacity," Health Minister Mario Russo told the local *Telefé* channel Thursday in his first TV appearance since the dengue outbreak. When asked how Argentines should protect themselves in the meantime, he offered a warning that was instantly mocked on social media:

"Be careful with shorts," he said.

The dengue virus has exploded across Latin America over the past muggy weeks of summer in the Southern Hemisphere.

Associated Press

Zimbabwe introduces new currency as depreciation and rising inflation stoke economic turmoil

BY FARAI MUTSAKA
 Associated Press
 HARARE, Zimbabwe

(AP) — Zimbabwe on Friday launched a new currency to replace its previous one



Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe Governor, John Mushayavanhu holds a sample of the country's new currency at a press briefing in Harare, Friday, April 5, 2024.

Associated Press

that in recent months has been battered by depreciation, and in some instances rejection by the population. Authorities hope the new measure will halt

a currency crisis underlining the country's yearslong economic troubles.

Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe Gov. John Mushayavanhu said the new currency will be called ZiG, and will be anchored on gold reserves and a basket of foreign currencies. It goes into effect on Monday.

The Zimbabwe dollar has come under sustained pressure in recent weeks, making it one of the world's worst performing currencies. Since January, the Zimbabwe dollar lost over 70% of its value on the official market, and was plunging even further on the thriving but illegal black market.

Inflation increased from 26.5% in December last

year to 34.8% this January before spiking to 55.3% in March, according to official figures.

Traders were increasingly rejecting lower denominations of the now scrapped currency, with many insisting on payment only in U.S. dollars, which are also legal tender in the southern African country.

"We are doing what we are doing to ensure that our local currency does not die. We were already in a situation where almost 85% of the transactions are being conducted in U.S. dollars," Mushayavanhu told reporters in the capital, Harare. People have three weeks to exchange the old notes with the new currency, he said. Friday's announce-

ment is the latest of a cocktail of currency measures undertaken by the Zimbabwean government since the initial spectacular collapse of the Zimbabwe dollar in 2009. The period saw the country at one point issuing a 100 trillion Zimbabwe dollar banknote before the government was forced to temporarily scrap its currency and allow the U.S. dollar to be used as legal tender.

The country re-introduced a domestic note in 2016, marking the beginning of another round of currency volatility highlighted by changes to currency policy that included the banning of foreign currencies such as the U.S. dollar for domestic transactions in 2019.

Got plans for this weekend? Try visiting the farmer's markets!



(Oranjestad)—If you're looking for some fresh and local produce, visit the farmer's markets at Santa Rosa, STR FARM Aruba and Ostrich Farm this weekend for a nice selection of fruits, veggies, local honey, and other fresh and locally produced goods!

After their successful first pop-up market last month, The Department of Agriculture, or commonly known here as Santa Rosa, is organizing another Pop-Up Market/Farmer's Market at their headquarters at Piedra Plat 114A today starting from 8am to 11am. Santa Rosa is

known for promoting and teaching about farming on the island, and so it's where local farmers and cattlemen go to offer the community some of their home-grown produce. At this market you may find a few stands that sell locally-grown (micro) greens, as well as different fruits and veggies, fresh beef, eggs and even local honey.

Similarly today, STR FARM Aruba (Alto Vista 18F), and on Sunday the Ostrich Farm, are both hosting another market event, offering a wide range of fruits and veggies, as well as honey, eggs, herbs and lo-

cal craft! You may even find homemade kimchi and local coffee!

Agriculture is a huge part of the Aruban identity, as the island has a rich history of being built by local farmers and cattlemen back in the old days. This is why these local farmer's markets are essential in maintaining the tradition of the "cunucero*" and to further promote the beauty and love that goes into farming and cultivation of home-grown food. □

* "Farmer" in Papiamentu.



Aruba's most family-friendly beaches

(Oranjestad)—One of the biggest concerns that parents have when travelling with their children is a guarantee of their safety and healthy enjoyment. Therefore, we thought it would be a great help to travelling parents to list off some of the most family-friendly beaches around the island.

Baby Beach in San Nicolas

Baby Beach is one Aruba's most popular and visited beaches, and

for good reason: This sandy and quiet lagoon is a great place for parents to sit back and relax while their children play in the shallow shores of the beach. Beside the relaxing atmosphere, there are also several services that may accommodate your stay, like a parking lot, sun tent rentals, chairs, bathrooms and a snack bar right at the far left of the beach.

Mangel Halto in Pos Chiquito

Mangel Halto is situated in the back streets of the Pos Chiquito city. Though there are several stairs on the sides of the beach cliff leading you down, the best spot for families to hang out is across the bridge, passed the mangrove trees near the entrance sign. Here, there are small and big palapas, perfect for big and small families to set up their belongings. In this area, the shore is also shallow, falling right around your knee before slowly getting deeper: perfect for kids to safely play.

Eagle Beach/Palm Beach in the hotel area

Yet another highly popular beach site, Eagle Beach and Palm Beach is where most of our visitors go to tan, swim or play in the white sand. Because they are near the low-rise and high-rise hotel areas, these beaches are the most accessible for visitors on foot. These beaches also offer many palapas free to use, but you can also rent chairs

and tents. Much like Baby Beach, these sites are one of the best beaches for your children to play and build sand castles.

Boca Catalina in Malmok

Boca Catalina is a small bay beach near the Malmok beach area further down the hotel areas. Though it may not be a very sandy beach, it is relatively quiet and tranquil. This is a great place for family to lay down a big blanket and have a little picnic. This is also one of the best places to snorkel, as this area is filled with little fish and corals, even close to the shore.

Palm Island

Ok, this one is technically not a beach, but a must-visit attraction for family fun. This small water park oasis is located further down the Mangel Halto Beach and is reachable by boat. This water park offers 6 hours of fun activities, food, drinks, and a chance to see pink flamingoes up close! □



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Aruba To You Set to Revolutionize Food Delivery Services in Aruba

(Oranjestad)—Aruba To You, a dynamic new food delivery service platform, is poised to transform the culinary landscape of Aruba with its official launch this week. Spearheaded by Gianluca Sardo, a seasoned Italian entrepreneur based in New York, the platform aims to provide an unparalleled dining experience for both locals and tourists alike.

Fueled by Sardo's passion for Aruba and its vibrant culinary scene, Aruba To You promises to offer a diverse array of cuisines from the island's top restaurants, delivered directly to customers' doorsteps. With a focus on technology, quality, and innovation, the platform seeks to elevate the dining experience while supporting local businesses.

Sardo, who envisions making Aruba his permanent home in the future, views the launch of Aruba To You as a testament to his commitment to the island's



growth and prosperity. "Aruba has captured my heart, and I am thrilled to contribute to its culinary landscape with Aruba To You," Sardo remarked.

The platform's user-friendly interface and efficient delivery service are designed to provide customers with a seamless and

enjoyable experience.

Despite the presence of established competitors, Sardo emphasizes that Aruba To You seeks to complement existing services rather than compete directly. "We aim to collaborate with local businesses and contribute to the diversity and

accessibility of dining options in Aruba," he stated.

Aruba To You has already garnered significant interest and support from both consumers and restaurant partners, positioning it as a promising addition to Aruba's culinary landscape.

For more information about Aruba To You and its services, please visit app.arubatoyou.com or contact info@arubatoyou.com

About Aruba To You

Aruba To You is a forthcoming food delivery service platform based in Aruba, founded by Gianluca Sardo. With a commitment to excellence, convenience, and technology, Aruba To You aims to revolutionize the dining experience on the island by offering a diverse selection of cuisines from top restaurants, delivered directly to customers' doorsteps. □

Aruba Tourism Authority honored loyal visitor at Costa Linda Beach Resort!

The Aruba Tourism Authority recently had the great pleasure of recognizing Distinguished Visitor of Aruba. The honoree was respectfully honored with a certificate

acknowledging her years of visits, loyalty, and love for the island of Aruba.

The honor certification is presented on behalf of the

Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation and to say "Masha Danki" to guests who have visited Aruba 10, 20, or 35 years or more consecutively.

The three honoring levels are as follows:

Distinguished Visitor (10>years consecutively visiting Aruba)
Goodwill Ambassador (20>years consecutively visiting Aruba)
Emerald Ambassador (35>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

The honoree was: Distinguished Visitor Ms. Lauren DeVoe from New York, United States.

Mr. Jorgino Willems representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and staff members of Costa Linda Beach Resort bestowed the certificate to the honoree, presented her with memorable gifts, and thanked her for choosing Aruba as her best-loved vacation destination, as her home away from home.

Top reasons for returning to

Aruba provided by the honoree were:

- Aruba's people.
- Aruba's wonderful weather.
- Aruba's sun, sand and sea.
- Aruba's fabulous restaurants.
- Aruba's fine choices of beverages.

On behalf of the Aruba Tourism Authority, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the honorees for their continued visits to the "One Happy Island". □



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Walk of Light in memory of Khaleesi and to unite the community again next week

On Saturday, April 13th, at 5 o'clock in the afternoon, the community of Aruba will have the opportunity to participate in a silent walk called "Walk of Light," a positive activity organized by various foundations that rescue animals and are also dedicated to the special dog Khaleesi.

For this, a reporter from our sister paper Bon Dia Aruba contacted Zoey Conijn Berkel of Luna Foundation Aruba Inc, where she explained that this is an activity so people don't forget what recently happened with the dog named "Khaleesi," whose death due to mistreatment and abuse shook the Aruban community and resulted in many demanding a change in the dog law for better treatment of dogs. "In memory of her, we are doing the walk, to unite our community," Zoey assured.

Dress in white for the walk For this reason, next week on Saturday, April 13th, from 5 o'clock in the afternoon until 8 o'clock at night, the walk will start at the Fire Department near the airport and will end at Governor's Bay Beach. The intention is for those who want to participate to wear white and also to bring signs, flags, lights, or bells. It is not allowed to bring balloons to preserve the environment. Furthermore, Zoey ensured that this is a silent walk and not a walk for dogs either. "If a dog behaves itself, without barking, and if it walks calmly, then it may accompany, otherwise not, because the idea is for people to understand what went wrong with Khaleesi and to prevent it from happening again." This case is raising more awareness in the community "and that shows me that Khaleesi did not die in vain,

her death did something, it opened people's eyes, it made people wake up from their dreams to start taking a look at what's happening here," she mentioned.

CHANGE IN DOG LAW UNDERWAY

Zoey commented that they talked with the office of the responsible minister, Ursell Arends, where they are working to change the law because the law at the moment indicates that if a person kills another person's dog, it is punishable, but if a person kills their own dog, it is punishable but with less severity. "For me, abuse is abuse, whether it's my dog or someone else's, the punishment should be the same, and they want to change the law, they told me they are trying to change it in a way that usually takes a year or two to change, and they are trying to push it to be changed by the end of

IN MEMORY OF
KHALEESI

AND ALL THE
ABUSED & NEGLECTED ANIMALS ON ARUBA & AROUND THE WORLD

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WALK OF LIGHT

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(Please NO balloons because we care for our planet)

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December, because what's happening now happens almost every day," she commented. Luna Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to rescuing and nurturing stray dogs (back to health),

whose work is recognized and appreciated from both locals and foreign volunteers. For those interested in getting a T-shirt and a sticker, they can contact the number indicated on the flyer: 5946689. □



ORANJESTAD — You are back and we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite va-

cation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

Complete the sentence:

Aruba to me

Aruba to me is Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well

as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation. Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again. For today we received a lovely message from our awesome visitors Daniel and Anne LeBlanc from Ontario, Canada.

They wrote to us saying:

"Aruba to us is one of the most beautiful places to travel. Finally all of our family got to experience this paradise. A beautiful island with spectacular people, beaches and restaurants. Many thanks to all who live in Aruba for your hospitality. You are all amazing...the best! You made our family feel right at home!"

Thank you for sending us this wonderful message sharing what Aruba means to you with us and our readers! □

Aruba to me

ORANJESTAD — You are back or still enjoying your vacation?... we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation.

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Episode CXIV -114 - Culture & Carnival



NOORD — Carnival is a very rich festive cycle that, thanks to demonstrations loaded with satire, creates for a few days an universe ruled by scandal, nonsense and debauchery. Each carnival tends to parody what the rest of the year has been taken seriously. It is about executing a kind of judgment of the year from a transgressive and popular perspective, building a chronicle of what has worried society and assuming that this fact gives an extra interesting value to the celebration.

The festival is traditionally linked to Catholicism, since its celebration precedes Lent and its origins dates back to star gazing time keepers of Antiquity. The word Carnival comes from

the Latin language "carnis levare" which means "to remove the meat." This sense is related to the fast that one must perform during Lent and also to the control of worldly pleasures, which shows an attempt by the Catholic Church to control the desires of the faithful. As globalization and modernity have not yet won the battle against popular culture, carnival still resists cultural uniformity despite adapting to social change linking the present with the past and the individual with the community.

The carnival party implies the continuity of the original local social groups and at this moment there is debate between the values of use (identity) and the values of change (tour-

ism). The great enemies of the traditional carnival are the accelerated process of change and the uniformity caused by globalization. Although there is a tendency to copy the "world carnival programs", in carnival party there are always two variants: the one version rooted in ancient customs and religious traditions, the other a more grotesque, spontaneous and street version. If we consider that the informal version is related to what is in fashion, we reach a turning point where the conventional social structure is destroyed to create an artificial one and try to level the carnival party to the culture of each place. This is where each society must make a difference and express its identity through its heritage; such is the case of Aruba, which had a very specific way of life before change was imposed.

The carnival compared to other types of traditions such as the "Dera Gai" is a festival in constant process of change and transformation. It is precisely at this point where education is of great importance to protect intangible cultural



assets, since that should differentiate the study of intangible heritage in general and that of dogmatic festive rituals in particular. If we understand intangible heritage as a deposit of the collective memory of peoples, we see that each social group is built on its traditions. However we must not forget that while the tradition for being dynamic is transformed, heritage and culture of our people is nourished by relevant and meaningful ways of life for those who created them and continue their practices.

The way carnival is celebrated nowadays on Aruba

has been very much influenced by English speaking Caribbean islands mainly Trinidad and its Steel band, Calypso beat in contrast to a regional religious expression very much connected to The old Roman Catholic Church, protector of the native, who incorporated and influenced many aspects of social behavior during seasonal procession and popular celebrations.

To get to know more over Aruba's and its origins, its animals and culture, we highly recommend you to book your visit for our renowned cultural encounter session has been entertaining curious participants for decades. Mail us at etnianaativa03@gmail.com or WhatsApp 297 592 2702 to confirm your participation. Our facilities and activities take place close to high rise hotels. □



Article by: Etnia Nativa

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Etnia Nativa is close to the high rise hotels



Papiamento words and phrases you may want to know!

(Oranjestad)—Aruba is a potting melt of different nationalities, cultures and languages. Primarily for this reason, the average Aruban can understand and speak Dutch, English and Spanish relatively well. However, as much as we pride ourselves in being able to communicate with almost everyone, we cherish our native tongue Papiamento above all else. Want to learn some common words in our language? Here are a few basic words and phrases that can get you a hat tip from an Aruban.

When you arrive at the airport in Aruba, one of the first words in Papiamento you may encounter is "Bon bini." Bon bini in Papiamento means welcome, and is probably the most famous Papiamento word for tourists.



Hi! Bye!

To be fair, there is no unique way to say "hello" in Papiamento. At least, not officially. We often just use the English "hello" or "hey", or Dutch "hallo" to greet someone. We do however, always follow it up with "con bay?" or "con ta?" Con bay is a shortened version of "con ta bay?", which essentially means "how are you?"

The word "con" in Papiamento means "how?" and is pronounced with a rounder "o" sounds, like in

the English word "cone". "Ta bay" refers to how you are doing. When we say goodbye, we use the word "ayo" (not like the Ayo Rock Formation, but also...kinda?). We may also use "te oro", which means "see you later".

Greetings during the day Most, if not all, languages have different ways to greet according to the time of day, and Papiamento is no different. Since Papiamento is heavily influenced from Portuguese and Spanish, some of these phrases

may look very familiar.

1. Bon dia is used in the morning, up to about noon. Bon dia essentially means good morning. The word "bon" means "good", and while "dia" does not directly mean "morning" in English, it is used often to refer to the morning time.

2. Bon tardi. In the afternoon to early evening hours, we use "bon tardi" to greet people, which means "good afternoon". "Tardi" actually comes from the word "atardi", which directly translates to "afternoon". However, the shortened "tardi" is used to keep the rhythm on the phrase. And the same could be said for our last greeting of the day.

3. Bon nochi. You guessed it, "bon nochi" means "good night". Just like "tardi", "nochi" is actually the shortened version of the word "anochi".

Yes...no...maybe?

The affirmative and negative expression is very simple in Papiamento. Just like Spanish, our yeses are "si" and our no's are "no". Pretty easy right? If you want to gain some extra points from younger locals, you can also say "se", which is a more casual affirmative used mostly by the younger generation. However, do note: some older generations may find this improper and not respectful, so keep that in mind.

Thanks man...

Lastly, a word that we can also say more often is "danki", which means literally "thank you". "Danki" is derived from the Dutch word "bedankt". Though we don't really have a translation for "I appreciate it" in English, we do use "masha danki" to convey the message. "Masha" means "a lot" or "very", so "masha danki" means "thank you very much". □

Visit the natural bridges of Aruba!

(Oranjestad)—After you've visited the Alto Vista Church, the Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins and the mini natural pool that is located right next to it, you're next up around the northern coast line must be the Natural Bridge. Once the largest natural bridge in the Caribbean, this bridge has been a tourist attraction for many years.

The bridge was formed during thousands of years, cut and crafted by the wild waves that crash into the coral stone walls of the coast. Before its collapse, this bridge measured 30 meters in

length and 7 meters in height, making it the biggest natural bridge in the Caribbean at the time. For many years, this site was also a frequently visited beach, as the bridge had a small opening through which the water would flow into the tiny beach.

Unfortunately in 2005, the bridge collapsed, and the little beach dried up. Despite this, this site remained a tourist attraction, with many visitors walking along the coral cliffs of the bridge to see the spectacular view of the northern coastline and the Caribbean Sea. Visitors

can also still visit the souvenir shop on the left of the bridge entrance.

While the natural bridge no longer is functional, there is now a smaller natural bridge very close. This bridge is often called the "Baby Bridge" or "Daughter Bridge". □



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 41 Run-down

1 Tight-fitting

5 Salad servers

10 In shape

12 Dote on

13 Texas player

14 Variety show

15 Watering hole

16 Naval initials

18 Quill need

19 Muck

21 Deeds

22 Some diviners read them

24 Photo finish

25 Simple tops

29 Calendar boxes

30 Will subject

32 Bar rocks

33 Spots

34 Crone

35 Baseball's Ryan

37 Oneness

39 Add a change to

40 Consume

42 Basic idea

DOWN

1 Rough

guesses

2 Dietary

restriction

3 Fabricated

4 Berlin

lang.

5 Sea dogs

6 Pindar

poem

7 Beginner

8 Gls,

slangily

9 Tries

to find

11 Lincoln

debater

G	O	M	A	D	H	O	M	E	S
A	R	U	B	A	A	B	O	U	T
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		F	O	P	T	O	E		
		D	R	U	I	D	A	N	T
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O	N	E	S	P	O	T	M	A	R
C	A	N	O	E	I	C	I	N	G
A	D	D	O	N	N	I	E	C	E
L	A	S	T	S	G	A	S	E	S

Yesterday's answer

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9
10				11		12			
13						14			
15				16	17			18	
19			20				21		
	22					23			
			24						
	25	26					27	28	
29					30				31
32				33				34	
35			36			37	38		
39						40			
41							42		

4-6

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

4-6

CRYPTOQUOTE

RSIICQHTT CT QAN NRH

SKTHQOH AU IPAKJHFT; CN'T

NRH SKCJCND NA MHSJ BCNR

NRHF. — TNHXX FSPSKAJC

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: WHEN A CLOWN MOVES INTO A PALACE, HE DOESN'T BECOME A KING. THE PALACE BECOMES A CIRCUS. — TURKISH PROVERB

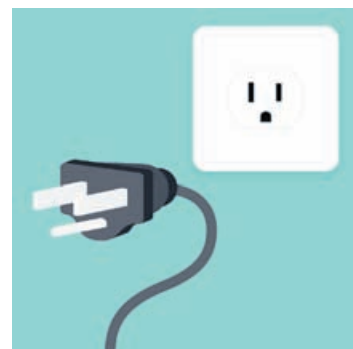
Cruise ship Schedule: Apr 2 - Apr 07 2024

TUE	02	OOSTERDAM	08.00	17.00	B
		RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS	08.00	21.00	C
		CELEBRITY REFLECTION	09.00	22.00	I
WED	03	EURODAM	07.00	16.00	B
		ODYSSEY OF THE SEAS	08.00	23.00	C
		CARNIVAL HORIZON	07.00	15.00	I
THUS	04	NORWEGIAN SKY	08.00	20.00	C
SAT	06	SEABOURN OVATION	08.00	23.00	B
		CELEBRITY BEYOND	16.00	****	C
SUN	07	CELEBRITY BEYOND - Dept.	****	18.00	C

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic—but important—information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

Electrical power



Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply

voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

Drinking water



The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

Supermarket hours



Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

Safety



Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

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Eclipse weather forecast points to clear skies in the Northeast and central U.S. Texas is iffy

By **ADITHI RAMAKRISHNAN**
AP Science Writer

DALLAS (AP) — Some who hope to witness Monday's total solar eclipse may see the sun obscured by clouds instead of by the moon. There's still some time for forecasts to change, but meteorologists predict that eclipse day storms could blanket parts of the path, which stretches from Mexico and Texas through Maine and parts of Canada.

If clouds don't get in the way, viewers in the path wearing eclipse glasses will see the moon begin to slowly cover the sun until it is completely blocked, a period of darkness called "totality" during which temperatures drop and the sun's corona will be visible.

What's the forecast along the eclipse's path?

Clouds are expected in much of the eclipse's path Monday thanks to storms that are moving across the central U.S.

As of Friday afternoon, the Northeastern U.S. looks like it has the best chance of clear skies, along with large patch of the central U.S. near southeastern Missouri and southern Illinois.

Canada, too, may have only light cloud cover that won't significantly impact the view, according to National Weather Service meteorologist Marc Chenard. Higher, thinner clouds should still allow eclipse goers to glimpse the sun, while lower, thicker clouds could obscure the spectacle entirely.

Parts of Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York and Texas are questionable. Northeast Texas, Chenard says, "could kind of go either way at this point." Mexico may also have low to mid-level cloud cover.

Thushari Jayasekara, a physics professor at Southern Illinois University, saw the 2017 eclipse from Carbondale, Illinois, where it was partially hidden by clouds. From her vantage point at the university's Sa-



This satellite image provided by NOAA shows clouds over North America on Thursday, April 4, 2024.

Associated Press

luki Stadium, the spectacle disappeared right as the final bit of the sun was extinguished by the moon. The crowd fell silent.

"It was dark, but we were not able to see the sun," she said. The clouds parted again during totality, allowing those in Carbondale to catch a glimpse of the full effect.

Storms with severe weather potential after the eclipse from Texas to Arkansas could impact homeward travel.

How accurate is the eclipse weather forecast?

"The uncertainty is still pretty high," Chenard said. The storms moving across the country make it difficult for meteorologists to predict exactly where and when

clouds will arrive.

Weather conditions in the northeast U.S. have looked promising so far, but the timing and speed of Monday's storms may influence what cloud cover looks like for the rest of the country.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Weather Prediction Center will update the eclipse forecast daily until Monday.

Eclipse enthusiasts should monitor weather forecasts over the weekend and keep plans flexible. Daniel Dawson, an atmospheric scientist at Purdue University, drove to Carbondale for the 2017 eclipse with his family then changed plans day-of and drove east to Kentucky based on

the cloud forecast.

"Look for where the confidence seems to be the greatest as you head towards the event," he said. How can I see the solar eclipse if it's cloudy or rained out?

Eclipse viewers can still watch the total solar eclipse online.

Associated Press journalists will also bring live coverage of the eclipse from across the path, starting at 10 a.m. EDT with views from Mazatlán, Mexico, and other locations. □

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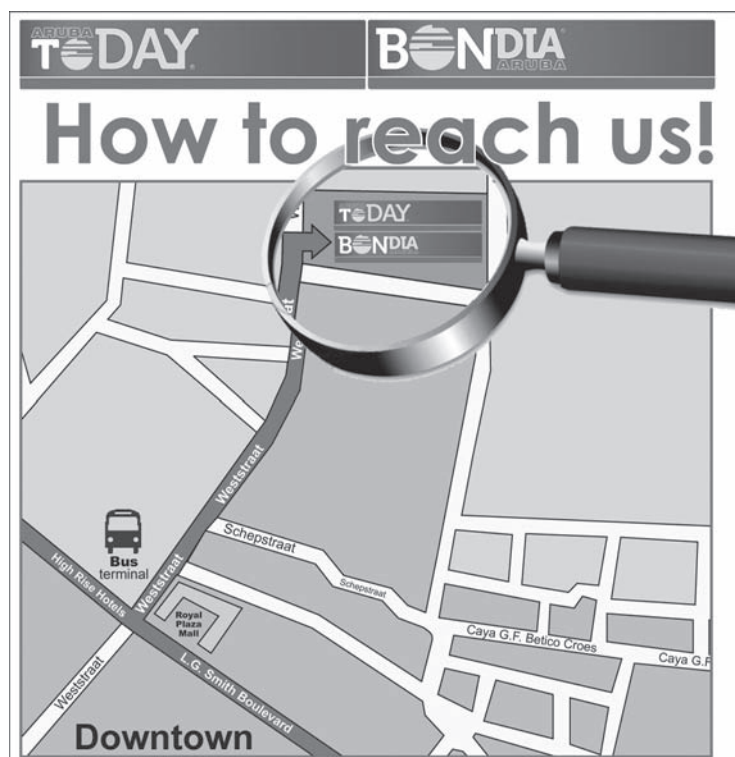
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Should you itemize or take a standard deduction on your tax return? Here's what to know

By KATHERINE ROTH
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — When tackling your taxes, it can sometimes be hard to figure out whether to opt for a standard deduction or itemize.

According to tax pros, itemizing generally only makes sense if your itemized deductions, taken together, add up to more than the current standard deduction of \$13,850 for a single filer and \$27,700 for a married couple.

Here's what you should know:

Standard deduction versus itemizing

For the vast majority of tax filers, the standard deduction is the way to go.

"Generally, taxpayers whose total itemized deductions are less than the standard deduction (based on their filing status) will benefit from taking the standard deduction. However, if the taxpayer's total itemized deductions are greater than their standard deduction, they must itemize," says Kathy Pickering, chief tax officer at H&R Block.

There are a few exceptions,



Money is donated for out of work musicians on March 18, 2021, in New York.

though, and some things to consider itemizing that people sometimes forget.

"One situation where it may be beneficial to itemize is when the taxpayer is claimed as a dependent on another taxpayer's return, and their standard deduction is limited," says Pickering.

Deductions can include amounts paid for eligible state and local income

taxes, real property taxes, personal property taxes, mortgage interest, disaster losses, gifts to charity, and a portion of medical and dental expenses, among others. According to Tom O'Saben, director of tax content and government relations at the National Association of Tax Professionals, the biggest three potential deductions for most people are mortgage inter-

est, charitable donations in cash or in property (a separate form must be filled out for anything over \$500, and appraisal must be done for anything over \$5,000), and eligible state and local taxes (known as SALT), which for most people is now capped at \$10,000. Deductions for the self-employed or business owners "For the small business owner, almost all tax-de-

Associated Press

ductible business expenses come out of their checkbook. Capturing those is the easy part. But there are a few things that are easy to miss," says Keith Hall, CEO of the National Association for the Self-Employed (and a CPA himself).

Car use for small business is one thing. Keep a log in your car. When you go see a client or go to the post office or supply store, jot down those miles. They add up. 65.5 cents per mile is allowed as a deduction for 2023.

The home office deduction is also easy to miss. If you have a dedicated home office for your business, \$5 per square foot can be deducted.

Retirement fund contributions can also be deducted, Hall says. Those contributions save tax dollars today. A simplified employee pension fund is something many small business owners have.

"The SEP is as easy to open as opening a bank account and they can contribute up to 20 percent of their profit into that account, and it's tax deductible," says Hall. □

Buy groceries at Walmart recently? You may be eligible for a class action settlement payment

NEW YORK (AP) — If you purchased some weighted groceries or bagged fruit at Walmart in recent years, you may be eligible for a cash payment from a class action settlement with the retailer. The class action lawsuit, first filed in October 2022, alleges that Walmart shoppers across the U.S. and Puerto Rico who purchased certain sold-by-weight meat and seafood as well as select citrus sold in bulk bags paid more than the lowest price advertised in stores.

Walmart has denied any wrongdoing but agreed to pay \$45 million to settle the litigation. That means that impacted consumers can

now submit claims for cash payments. "We will continue providing our customers everyday low prices to help them save money on the

products they want and need," a spokesperson for the Bentonville, Arkansas, company stated. "We still deny the allegations, how-

ever we believe a settlement is in the best interest of both parties."

Consumers can learn more about submitting a claim and the products that are covered on the settlement administrator's website. Cash payments are available for anyone who purchased these certain weighted meat, seafood and bagged citrus products which includes select oranges, grapefruit and tangerines at Walmart in the U.S. and Puerto Rico between October 19, 2018 and January 19, 2024.

Payments will range in amount depending on each claim. It's possible to get some money even if

you don't have a purchase receipt anymore.

Consumers without a proof of purchase can receive between \$10 and \$25, depending on how many eligible products they attest to buying during the settlement class period. Meanwhile, those with receipts or other documentation could be entitled to get 2% of the total cost for each product they purchased at up to \$500. Approved claimants will receive their payments electronically through Venmo, Zelle, ACH or a virtual pre-paid MasterCard but paper checks can also be requested those unable to receive payments electronically. □



Shoppers walk to a Walmart in Vernon Hills, Ill., Tuesday, March 28, 2023.

Associated Press

Julius Randle needs surgery on right shoulder, will miss the rest of New York Knicks' season

By **BRIAN MAHONEY**
AP Basketball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Julius Randle needs surgery on his right shoulder and will miss the rest of the season, a crushing blow for a New York Knicks team that was surging before the All-Star forward was hurt in January.

The Knicks said Thursday that Randle would be re-evaluated in five months, meaning it's unclear if he will even be ready for the start of next season.

But they had focused on their possibilities for this season when Randle dislocated his shoulder Jan. 27 in a victory over the Miami Heat. The Knicks ended up 14-2 that month, tied for the second-most wins in franchise history in a month.

But without Randle, and fellow starters OG Anunoby and Mitchell Robinson out for most of their games since then, the Knicks had fallen into fifth place in the Eastern Conference entering their game Thursday against Sacramento.



Associated Press

"Tough blow for us, but we've just got to focus on what we have in the locker room and he'll be there to support us," Knicks forward Josh Hart said.

Randle told Bleacher Report he decided on surgery after re-injuring the shoulder during a full-contact workout more than a month

ago — though Knicks coach Tom Thibodeau has consistently said Randle was never cleared to take contact.

Thibodeau clarified after the Knicks' victory over the Kings that Randle had been working out with controlled contact, meaning there were pads involved.

He didn't say there was a setback, but rather that Randle may have felt more soreness after some workouts.

Randle was hurt when he landed hard with 4:27 remaining in the victory over the Heat when Jaime Jaquez Jr. stepped in front of him trying to take

a charge on Randle's drive to the basket. He has since been rehabbing the shoulder in hopes of avoiding surgery and returning in time for the postseason.

The regular season ends next weekend and the playoffs begin April 20.

"We wanted to take a look at, could we rehab it and strengthen it get it to the point where he could play?" Thibodeau said. "And we could never get there, so this is the decision."

Randle said it came after he met with multiple shoulder specialists who warned him of the danger he faced.

"One said I 100% needed to get surgery. Another one said I'm at risk, but if I dislocated it again, I could damage it permanently," Randle told Bleacher Report. "I believe in this team and wanted to give it a try. It didn't work out, unfortunately. It's a tough pill to swallow, but it was my only option at this point. It wasn't getting right." □

USC's Bronny James declares for NBA draft and enters transfer portal after 1 season

By **BETH HARRIS**
AP Sports Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Bronny James will enter the NBA draft after one season at Southern California that was shortened by his recovery from cardiac arrest. The 19-year-old son of LeBron James announced Friday on his Instagram account that he also plans to retain his college eligibility and will enter the transfer portal.

"I've had a year with some ups and downs but all added to growth for me as a man, student and athlete," James wrote.

James posted his decision hours before USC introduced Eric Musselman as its new coach. He comes from Arkansas and replaces Andy Enfield, who left on Monday to become coach at SMU.

Musselman is scrambling to

assemble a coaching staff and assess a roster that has also lost junior Kobe Johnson, who said Thursday that he's committed to cross-town rival UCLA. USC star freshman Isaiah Collier at-

tended Musselman's news conference.

"I need to try to get a hold of Bronny. I've texted him," Musselman said after his campus news conference. "Certainly he's got a lot of

options and we respect those options. We just want him to know that, hey, this opportunity here, if you want to play at USC, we'd love to have him. Such a talented young man."

James averaged 4.8 points and 2.8 rebounds while starting six of 25 games for the Trojans. He shot 37% from the field, 27% from 3-point range and 68% from the free throw line.

The elder James, his wife and their 9-year-old daughter were frequent courtside spectators at the Galen Center this season.

"Bronny is his own man," the elder James said this week. "He has some tough decisions to make. When he's ready to make those decisions, he'll let us all know. But as his family, we're going to support whatever he does."

The 39-year-old James has

been vocal about wanting to play with his son in the NBA.

Klutch Sports CEO Rich Paul, who represents father and son, said recently that he doesn't "value a young player getting into the lottery as much as I do getting him on the right team in the right developmental situation."

James, a 6-foot-4 combo guard, didn't make his college debut until Dec. 10. Afterward, James appeared in front of the media for less than a minute to thank the doctors, athletic trainers and support system that helped him return to play.

Despite numerous requests, James never spoke to reporters during the season. He suffered cardiac arrest on July 20 during a workout at the Galen Center. □



Southern California guard Bronny James dribbles the ball during the first half of an NCAA college basketball game against UCLA, Saturday, Jan. 27, 2024, in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

Blue Jays beat Yankees 3-0 in New York home opener behind Clement's tiebreaking pinch homer

NEW YORK (AP) — Pinch-hitter Ernie Clement had a tiebreaking solo home run off Caleb Ferguson leading off the seventh inning, and the Toronto Blue Jays beat the Yankees 3-0 Friday in New York's home opener.

"The Toronto faithful may not like this but I was the biggest Yankees fan growing up, so I'm glad we could kick their (butt)," said Clement, who grew up in Rochester, New York.

A 28-year-old who appeared in just 35 major league games over the previous two seasons, Clement drove the second pitch from Ferguson (0-1) into the left-field seats for his first career pinch homer. He was the first Toronto pinch hitter to give the Blue Jays the lead from the seventh inning on since Justin Smoak at Miami on Aug. 31, 2018.

"I just like to keep it simple," Clement said. "I'm up there looking for a fastball to drive and do damage on, and he laid one in there and I'm just glad I could come through for these guys."

Juan Soto went 0 for 4 with a pair of strikeouts in his pinstripes debut, slamming his bat and helmet after making the final out of the eighth.



Toronto Blue Jays' Alejandro Kirk, left, greets Ernie Clement (28) after Clement hit a home run during the seventh inning of the baseball game against the New York Yankees at Yankee Stadium in New York, Friday, April 5, 2024.

He bowed to fans in right field in the top of the first and was greeted with a standing ovation when he came to the plate in the bottom half. Soto is in a 1-for-16 slide after a 9-for-17 start.

"Just frustration that comes out," Soto said. "You want to do so (many) things for this fan base and get your team going, and you have the chance to do it and couldn't get it done. It re-

ally gets you mad. And at the end of the day, that's my fault, shouldn't do that, but things happen."

Marcus Stroman matched Yusei Kikuchi with shutout ball before the bullpen took over. Kikuchi gave up four hits in 5 1/3 innings with seven strikeouts.

He played catch in Central Park on Thursday's day off. "It's my fifth time doing it and I feel like a Central Parker now," Kikuchi said

through a translator. "I found the biggest rock, because I can, and I did some visualization from the top of that top rock."

Nick Burdi threw a pair of run-scoring wild pitches in the ninth, prompting boos from the sellout crowd of 47,812.

Yimi García (1-0) got the final two outs of the sixth and Génesis Cabrera retired two batters in his first appearance since a three-

game suspension for causing a benches-clearing incident at Tampa Bay last weekend. Trevor Richards struck out the side in the eighth and Chad Green got his first save since 2022 with the Yankees as Toronto pitched a six-hitter to start the last leg of an opening 10-game trip.

After beginning 6-1 on the road, New York dropped to 81-40-1 in home openers. The Yankees were shut out in a home opener for the first time since 1967.

Giancarlo Stanton was 0 for 4 and is hitting .120 (3 for 25) with 13 strikeouts.

An earthquake about three hours before game time wasn't felt by most of the Yankees on the field for batting practice.

Stroman allowed three hits in six innings. He has not allowed an earned run in 12 innings this season.

Cheered when he was introduced, Paul O'Neill drew boos when he bounced the ceremonial first pitch to Don Mattingly, now Toronto's bench coach, in pairing of former Yankees stars. Toronto selected the contract of right-hander Paolo Espino from Triple-A Buffalo and designated right-hander Wes Parsons for assignment. □

Associated Press

Top-seeded Pegula saves four match points in 3rd-set tiebreaker to reach Charleston Open semifinals

CHARLESTON, S.C. (AP) — Top-seeded Jessica Pegula saved four match points in a third-set tiebreaker and



Jessica Pegula, of the United States, serves to Magda Linette, of Poland, at the Charleston Open tennis tournament Thursday, April 4, 2024, in Charleston, S.C.

Associated Press

beat Victoria Azarenka 6-4, 3-6, 7-6 (7) Friday to reach the Charleston Open semifinals.

Pegula squandered four match points of her own, up 5-4 in the final set against Azarenka, a two-time Australian Open champion. But tied 7-7 in the tiebreaker, Azarenka missed wide with Pegula at the net, then pushed a service return long.

"I was playing well today, but you know what? Stuff happens and you've got to figure it out," Pegula said. "And I was able to figure it today and I'm just going to use that feeling, that

confidence."

The fifth-ranked Pegula also reached the semifinals in Charleston last year but lost to Belinda Bencic.

Pegula will play Daria Kasatkina on Saturday for a spot in the final. The 11th-ranked Kasatkina defeated Jaqueline Cristian 6-7 (4), 6-2, 6-3.

In the other two quarterfinal matches, Elise Mertens will face Danielle Collins and 2021 Charleston winner Veronika Kudermetova will play seventh-ranked Maria Sakkari.

It was in Charleston on the green clay that Kasatkina, then 19, won her first WTA

Tour title in 2017. She has added five more singles titles since, though none since 2022.

Kasatkina said Cristian's play and the windy conditions were difficult to contend with early on.

"Honestly, I was ready to go home," Kasatkina said. "I had to find the ways to win points, which was very tough. I was very proud of myself."

Kasatkina improved to 17-3 at the Charleston Open, making the semifinals for the second straight year. She lost to eventual champion Ons Jabeur a year ago. □